

21st December 2023



Dear Parents and Carers,

You may have seen in the news recently, that across the country children and young people are increasingly using electronic cigarettes or vapes. The NHS guidance is clear that although e-cigarettes or vapes are preferable to cigarettes for people who already smoke, they are not recommended for anyone who has never smoked cigarettes. The long-term damage is unclear and we have already seen that they can have devastating effects on children and young people. An 11-year-old was recently hospitalised with a collapsed lung due to use of vapes; you may have seen other worrying cases of children being affected in the media. It is illegal for shops to sell these devices to under 18s, although it is commonly believed that the bright colours and interesting flavours are deliberately designed to be attractive to children and young people.

We have also been made aware that vapes that contain THC are being sold/exchanged by young people in our community. THC is the active ingredient in cannabis and THC vapes are illegal for people of any age in the UK. Worryingly, we have been made aware that most 'THC' vapes do not contain THC but instead contain the synthetic cannabinoid known as Spice.

In order to protect and safeguard children at Chaucer School, we will be introducing randomised screening to ensure that children are not bringing vapes into school. The screening will only be conducted by members of the Senior Leadership Team using a hand held a metal detector and no contact will be made between the detector and the child. If the metal detector beeps, the child will be asked to identify the source of the beep. Any banned items, with the exception of mobile phones, will be confiscated and you as parent/carer will be contacted. We reserve the right to destroy or pass to the police any illegal items that are found.

E-cigarettes and vapes are banned items at school. In line with our relationships and behaviour policy, any student found to be in possession of any banned or prohibited item will be requested to hand over the item for confiscation. Any refusal to comply with confiscation will lead to an appropriate school response being issued. The response will include time spent inside of reflection, after school detentions, fixed term suspension, or permanent exclusion depending on the item being withheld. Any repeated possession of or use of a vape in school is likely to result in suspension.

I am also asking for your support to start the conversation around vaping with your children to let them know the dangers and risks involved.



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Please discourage them from bringing vapes into school. ASH and Smokefree Sheffield have produced a fact sheet for parents and carers, which is displayed on our Chaucer website.

Please report any concerns relating to the illegal sale of vapes to the police.

If you have concerns about your child using vapes or illegal substances, please contact your child's year team for support. All Engagement Leaders at Chaucer School are trained safeguarding deputies and can provide the appropriate signposting and advice.

Further information can be found on the following websites:

ASH [Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain - ASH](#)

Smokefree Sheffield [Vaping: The Facts | Smokefree Sheffield](#)

The Corner [Welcome to The Corner - WHO WE ARE \(thecornersheffield.com\)](#)

We would like to hold some parental information workshops in school around children and young people's drug and alcohol misuse with the local support service The Corner. Please contact your child's year team if you would be interested in attending a workshop to learn more about the challenges facing our children and young people and drug and alcohol use.

I thank you for your support in this matter.

Best wishes,

E Scott

Emmeline Scott

Assistant Headteacher: Vulnerable Learners

Designated Safeguarding Lead | CLA Designated Teacher | Senior Mental Health Lead